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PREVENTION OF AN ARMS RACE IN OUTER SPACE

Report of the First Committee

Rapporteur: Mr. Rajab SUKAYRI (Jordan)

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" was included in the provisional agenda of the fiftieth session of the General Assembly in accordance with Assembly resolution 49/74 of 15 December 1994.

2. At its 3rd plenary meeting, on 22 September 1995, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include the item in its agenda and to allocate it to the First Committee.

3. At its 2nd meeting, on 12 October 1995, the First Committee decided to hold a general debate on all disarmament and international security items allocated to it, namely, items 57 to 78, 80 and 81. The deliberations on those items took place at the 3rd to 11th meetings, from 16 to 20 and on 25 and 26 October 1995 (see A/C.1/50/PV.3-11). Structured discussions of specific subjects within the adopted thematic approach were held from 30 October to 3 November. Consideration of draft resolutions on those items took place at the 13th and 17th meetings, from 6 to 9 November (see A/C.1/50/PV.13-17). Action on the draft resolutions was taken at the 18th to 29th meetings on 10, 13 to 17, 20 and 21 November (see A/C.1/50/PV.18-29).

4. The First Committee had no documents before it in connection with item 69.

II. CONSIDERATION OF DRAFT RESOLUTION (A/C.1/50/L.33)

5. At the 17th meeting, on 9 November 1995, the representative of Sri Lanka, on behalf of Algeria, Bolivia, Brazil, China, Egypt, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Marshall Islands, Mongolia, Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria, Sri Lanka, the Sudan and Ukraine submitted a draft resolution entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space" (A/C.1/50/L.33), which was later also sponsored by Bangladesh, Brunei Darussalam, Kenya, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea.

6. At its 21st meeting, on 15 November, the Committee voted on paragraphs of draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.33 as follows:

(a) The nineteenth preambular paragraph was adopted by a recorded vote of 99 to 1, with 55 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of) Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamihiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(b) Operative paragraph 8 was adopted by a recorded vote of 100 to 1, with 55 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Gabon, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

(c) Operative paragraph 10 was adopted by a recorded vote of 91 to 1, with 63 abstentions. The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jordan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania,

Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Rwanda, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Uganda, Ukraine, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: United States of America.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Guyana, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Russian Federation, Saint Lucia, Samoa, Slovakia, Slovenia, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

7. At the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.1/50/L.33, as a whole, by a recorded vote of 113 to none, with 46 abstentions (see para. 8). The voting was as follows:

In favour: Afghanistan, Algeria, Angola, Argentina, Armenia, Australia, Azerbaijan, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Brunei Darussalam, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Chile, China, Colombia, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Cuba, Cyprus, Democratic People's Republic of Korea, Djibouti, Ecuador, Egypt, El Salvador, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Fiji, Gabon, Georgia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guinea, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, India, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Jamaica, Japan, Jordan, Kazakstan, Kenya, Kuwait, Lao People's Democratic Republic, Lebanon, Lesotho, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Madagascar, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Marshall Islands, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Myanmar, Namibia, Nepal, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Niger, Nigeria, Oman, Pakistan, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Qatar, Republic of Korea, Russian Federation, Rwanda, Samoa, Saudi Arabia, Senegal, Singapore, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Suriname, Swaziland, Syrian Arab Republic, Thailand, Togo, Trinidad and Tobago, Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Uganda, Ukraine, United Arab Emirates, United Republic of Tanzania, Uruguay, Venezuela, Viet Nam, Yemen, Zambia, Zimbabwe.

Against: None.

Abstaining: Albania, Andorra, Antigua and Barbuda, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Micronesia (Federated States of), Monaco, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Republic of Moldova, Romania, Saint Lucia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Tajikistan, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Turkey, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

III. RECOMMENDATION OF THE FIRST COMMITTEE

8. The First Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Prevention of an arms race in outer space

The General Assembly,

Recognizing the common interest of all mankind in the exploration and use of outer space for peaceful purposes,

Reaffirming the will of all States that the exploration and use of outer space, including the Moon and other celestial bodies, shall be for peaceful purposes, shall be carried out for the benefit and in the interest of all countries, irrespective of their degree of economic or scientific development, and shall be the province of all mankind,

Reaffirming also provisions of articles III and IV of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies, 1/

Recalling the obligation of all States to observe the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the use or threat of use of force in their international relations, including in their space activities,

Reaffirming further paragraph 80 of the Final Document of the Tenth Special Session of the General Assembly, 2/ in which it is stated that in order to prevent an arms race in outer space further measures should be taken and appropriate international negotiations held in accordance with the spirit of the Treaty,

Recalling also its previous resolutions on this issue and taking note of the proposals submitted to the General Assembly at its tenth special session and

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1/ Resolution 2222 (XXI), annex.

2/ Resolution S-10/2.

at its regular sessions, and of the recommendations made to the competent organs of the United Nations and to the Conference on Disarmament,

Recognizing the grave danger for international peace and security of an arms race in outer space and of developments contributing to it,

Emphasizing the paramount importance of strict compliance with existing arms limitation and disarmament agreements relevant to outer space, including bilateral agreements, and with the existing legal regime concerning the use of outer space,

Considering that wide participation in the legal regime applicable to outer space could contribute to enhancing its effectiveness,

Noting that bilateral negotiations, begun in 1985 between the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics and the United States of America, were conducted with the declared objective of working out effective agreements aimed, inter alia, at preventing an arms race in outer space,

Welcoming the re-establishment of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space at the 1994 session of the Conference on Disarmament, in the exercise of the negotiating responsibilities of this sole multilateral body on disarmament, to continue to examine and identify, through substantive and general consideration, issues relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space,

Noting that the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, taking into account its previous efforts since its establishment in 1985 and seeking to enhance its functioning in qualitative terms, continued the examination and identification of various issues, existing agreements and existing proposals, as well as future initiatives relevant to the prevention of an arms race in outer space, 3/ and that this contributed to a better understanding of a number of problems and to a clearer perception of the various positions,

Regretting the inability of the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in 1995,

Emphasizing the mutually complementary nature of bilateral and multilateral efforts in the field of preventing an arms race in outer space, and hoping that concrete results will emerge from those efforts as soon as possible,

Convinced that further measures should be examined in the search for effective and verifiable bilateral and multilateral agreements in order to prevent an arms race in outer space,

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3/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-ninth Session, Supplement No. 27 (A/49/27), sect. III.D (para. 5 of the quoted text).

Stressing that the growing use of outer space increases the need for greater transparency and better information on the part of the international community,

Recalling in this context its previous resolutions, in particular resolutions 45/55 B of 4 December 1990, 47/51 of 9 December 1992 and 48/74 A of 16 December 1993, in which, inter alia, the importance of confidence-building measures was reaffirmed as means conducive to ensuring the attainment of the objective of the prevention of an arms race in outer space,

Conscious of the benefits of confidence- and security-building measures in the military field,

Recognizing that there has been agreement in the Ad Hoc Committee that the conclusion of an international agreement or agreements to prevent an arms race in outer space remained the fundamental task of the Committee and that the concrete proposals on confidence-building measures could form an integral part of such agreements,

1. Reaffirms the importance and urgency of preventing an arms race in outer space and the readiness of all States to contribute to that common objective, in conformity with the provisions of the Treaty on Principles Governing the Activities of States in the Exploration and Use of Outer Space, including the Moon and Other Celestial Bodies;

2. Reaffirms its recognition, as stated in the report of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space, that the legal regime applicable to outer space by itself does not guarantee the prevention of an arms race in outer space, that this legal regime plays a significant role in the prevention of an arms race in that environment, that there is a need to consolidate and reinforce that regime and enhance its effectiveness, and that it is important strictly to comply with existing agreements, both bilateral and multilateral;

3. Emphasizes the necessity of further measures with appropriate and effective provisions for verification to prevent an arms race in outer space;

4. Calls upon all States, in particular those with major space capabilities, to contribute actively to the objective of the peaceful use of outer space and of the prevention of an arms race in outer space and to refrain from actions contrary to that objective and to the relevant existing treaties in the interest of maintaining international peace and security and promoting international cooperation;

5. Reiterates that the Conference on Disarmament, as the single multilateral disarmament negotiating forum, has the primary role in the negotiation of a multilateral agreement or agreements, as appropriate, on the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects;

6. Requests the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish the Ad Hoc Committee on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space in 1996 and to consider the question of preventing an arms race in outer space;

7. Also requests the Conference on Disarmament to intensify its consideration of the question of the prevention of an arms race in outer space in all its aspects, building upon areas of convergence and taking into account relevant proposals and initiatives, including those presented in the Ad Hoc Committee at the 1994 session of the Conference and at the forty-ninth and fiftieth sessions of the General Assembly;

8. Further requests the Conference on Disarmament to re-establish an ad hoc committee with an adequate mandate at the beginning of its 1996 session and to continue building upon areas of convergence, taking into account the work undertaken since 1985, with a view to undertaking negotiations for the conclusion of an agreement or agreements, as appropriate, to prevent an arms race in outer space in all its aspects;

9. Recognizes, in this respect, the growing convergence of views on the elaboration of measures designed to strengthen transparency, confidence and security in the peaceful uses of outer space;

10. Urges the Russian Federation and the United States of America to resume their bilateral negotiations with a view to reaching early agreement for preventing an arms race in outer space and to advise the Conference on Disarmament periodically of the progress of their bilateral sessions so as to facilitate its work;

11. Decides to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-first session the item entitled "Prevention of an arms race in outer space".